



Minnesota Department of Transportation

Transportation Building
395 John Ireland Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1899

June 30, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

SUBJECT: Negative Declaration Regarding the Need for an Environmental Impact Statement for the MN&S Freight Rail Study in St. Louis Park and Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota.

The proposed action consists of required track improvements to the existing Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) Bass Lake Spur, CP MN&S Spur, and the Burlington Northern Sante Fe (BNSF) Wayzata Subdivision in the City of St. Louis Park to accommodate the proposed relocation of the Twin Cities and Western (TC&W) freight rail traffic currently operating in the Kenilworth Corridor in Minneapolis. A portion of the proposed BNSF siding extends into the City of Minneapolis. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) and the project proposer is the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA).

The proposed action was described and analyzed in an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) circulated to the EAW Distribution List and others. A **Notice of Availability** appeared in the **EQB Monitor** on May 16, 2011. A public open house was held on June 8, 2011. The comment period closed June 15, 2011.

As the RGU for the proposed action, MnDOT has undertaken a thorough analysis of the project and its impacts. Through its own analysis, coordination with affected agencies, public and community involvement, and comment letters received, MnDOT has determined that the proposed project does not have the potential for significant environmental impact. MnDOT has concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required, and has issued a Negative Declaration Order for the project. This decision and determination is supported by the full administrative record of the project, including Findings of Fact and Conclusions. The Negative Declaration concludes the Minnesota state environmental review process.

MnDOT will circulate the Findings of Fact and Conclusions document, along with the Negative Declaration Order to the EAW distribution list, and all parties who provided comments on the EAW. These items and others, including all the comment submitted on the EAW, are available on the project website at: www.mnsrailstudy.org.

For the Minnesota Department of Transportation

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank Pafko".

Frank Pafko
Chief Environmental Officer
Minnesota Department of Transportation – Office of Environmental Stewardship